

**Amendments to the Claims:**

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) An image-processing device comprising:

an image information generating part for dividing an image to be processed into a plurality of small areas, said small areas each consisting of a plurality of pixels, and for generating, for each of said small areas, image information indicating a characteristic of the image;

an evaluation value determining part for determining an evaluation value according to the image information generated for each of said small areas and to the image information generated for each of small areas adjacent to the each of said small areas, the evaluation value indicating luminosity of each of the pixels constituting the image; and

an image-processing part for performing an image processing on each of the pixels of the image according to the evaluation value determined by said evaluation value determining part.

2. (Currently Amended) The image-processing device according to claim 1, wherein

said image-processing part includes a luminance level correcting part for correcting a luminance level of the image; and

said luminance level correcting part determines a luminance level correcting coefficient used for the luminance level correction according to the evaluation value for each of said pixels determined by said evaluation value determining part so as to perform a ~~luminance level~~ the luminance level correction processing on each of said pixels by using the coefficient.

3. (Currently Amended) The image-processing device according to claim 1, wherein

said evaluation value determining part performs a smoothing processing on the image information for each of said small areas generated by said image information generating part and determines the evaluation value according to the smoothed image information for each of the said small areas.

4. (Original) The image-processing device according to claim 1, wherein  
said evaluation value determining part performs a pre-correction processing on the image information for each of said small areas generated by said image information generating part in accordance with a characteristic of a photo-taking lens used for generating the image, and then determines the evaluation value according to the pre-corrected image information for each of said small areas.

5. (Original) The image-processing device according to claim 1, wherein  
said evaluation value determining part determines the evaluation value by weighting the image information for each of said small areas in accordance with a ratio of distances from a pixel as a subject for the evaluation-value determination to a predetermined point in each of said small areas whose image information is to be referred to for the evaluation-value determination.

6. (Currently Amended) A digital still camera comprising:  
an image-capturing part for capturing a subject to generate an image;  
an image information generating part for dividing the image generated by said

image-capturing part into a plurality of small areas, said small areas each consisting of a plurality of pixels, and for generating, for each of said small areas, image information indicating a characteristic of the image;

an evaluation value determining part for determining an evaluation value according to the image information generated for each of said small areas and to the image information generated for each of small areas adjacent to the each of said small areas, the evaluation value indicating luminosity of each of the pixels constituting the image; and

an image-processing part for performing an image processing on each of the pixels of the image according to the evaluation value determined by said evaluation value determining part.

7. (Original) The digital still camera according to claim 6, further comprising a divisional photometry part for dividing a subject field into a plurality of photometry areas and performing photometry for each of the photometry areas, wherein

said image information generating part generates the image information based on information obtained from said divisional photometry part.

8. (Canceled)

9. (Currently Amended) An image-processing method, comprising the steps of:  
dividing an image to be processed into a plurality of small areas, said small areas each consisting of a plurality of pixels, and for generating, for each of said small areas, image information indicating a characteristic of the image;

determining an evaluation value according to the image information generated for each of said small areas and the image information generated for each of small areas

adjacent to the each of said small areas, the evaluation value indicating luminosity of each of the pixels constituting the image; and

performing an image processing on each of the pixels of the image according to the evaluation value determined in the evaluation-value determining step.